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April 3, 2014

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No 13-184 E-Rate Modernization

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

This letter is written in collaboration with the NH Department of Education (DOE) and the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) who manages the NH Governor's Telecommunication Planning and Development Advisory Committee (TAB). We wish to comment on WC Docket No 13-184 from the New Hampshire perspective.

The NH Department of Education and the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development offer the following suggestions and comments to enhance the scope and participation in the E-Rate Program.

1. Focus E-Rate funding on higher capacity connections supported by fiber to schools and libraries. Priority should be given to rural districts using a combination of the free and reduced meal program and special education enrollment. Some NH schools and libraries currently do not file for funding and view the program as too laborious for the funding that is available. Offering a combined formula for funding distribution will enhance participation in the program.
2. As Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) is a long range plan for many rural districts, a phased approach with funding support will help to make the transition to VoIP easier as districts phase out their legacy systems.
3. Allow for one-time funding for schools and libraries to intergrate technology programs with broadband infrastructure to enhance online learning experiences for students. Special consideration should be given to those schools and libraries that participate in University and other initiatives that use video/web conferencing or other online learning management systems, deploy wifi, and deliver content over the educational networks.



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4. Restore funding to Title II-D enhancing Education through Technology (EETT) activities managed by State Departments of Education to fund equipment purchases, professional development and support the intergration of technology and student devices as a cost avoidance measure.
5. Create incentives for school districts and libraries that join regional or statewide purchasing consortiums with regards to software platforms, equipment, and connectivity for districts, faculty, staff and students.
6. Create a fund for activities of State Departments of Education to collect, track and maintain state-wide data on the utilization and availability of broadband capacity, and participation of schools districts and libraries in the E-Rate program. This data can be used to align state technology plans with the national educational technology plan and it's initiatives. This fund may then allow states to identify areas that additional funding is needed in order to deliver and support adequate broadband infrastructure.
7. Streamline the E-Rate application process and offer funding upfront and/or by reimbursement whichever method the applicant wishes to utilize.

Although we are one of many commenters on the docket, we look forward to a modernized E-Rate Program that better utilizes funding and ensures our schools and libraries have the tools needed to serve the citizens of NH.

Sincerely,



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